



DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

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CITY OF MILWAUKEE EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP POLICY

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define the authority and scope of responsibility associated with City of Milwaukee (COM) Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and to establish accountability standards for the efficient, productive, and successful operation of such groups.

An ERG is an employee group that has been formally recognized by the City and shares a common background, focus area, set of interests and/or goals that fosters an environment of inclusion. The City encourages the formation of ERGs to foster diversity, and encourage employees to share information, recognize achievements, and interact with fellow employees on an informal basis.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The City of Milwaukee is committed to encouraging, facilitating, and supporting the work of Employee Resource Groups as a mechanism to build community, foster awareness, respect, and inclusion within the workplace. The City believes that ERGs can be instrumental in achieving one or more of the following goals:

- Strengthen the City's ability to recruit a diverse workforce;
- retain a workforce that reflects the demographics of our City;
- Help new employees succeed during the onboarding process;
- Provide safe and supportive employee networks organized around shared characteristics or interest to help improve working relationships and create a more inclusive and attractive work environment;
- Help identify gaps and opportunities in the talent acquisition and development process;
- Provide opportunities for employee development, education, and training; and
- Create an open forum for exchange of ideas and provide a collective voice around shared issues and concerns.

3. ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ERG

To be formally recognized as a City supported ERG, the ERG must have the following:

1. An Official Name;
2. A mission statement and clearly defined goals and initiatives;
3. A documented recruitment plan including strategies to introduce new and current employees to the ERG and the City's organizational culture;
4. A management level sponsor or ally who will be available to provide guidance and support and who will serve as an advocate and share information with leadership;
5. Planned activities that are aligned with the goals established within this Policy for the City and not a specific department, section, or workgroup; and,
6. Require members to operate in a supportive, inclusive, and respectful manner towards each other and towards other ERGs, including that meetings and events are open to any City employee who wishes to attend.

4. MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY

Membership in a City sponsored ERG is voluntary and open to all City of Milwaukee employees. Participation in a City sponsored ERG must not conflict with work responsibilities.

Participation in an ERG or ERG sponsored activities during the employees regularly scheduled work hours is permitted provided that such participation does not conflict with the employees work responsibilities or the service delivery needs of the department.

Department specific work rules addressing ERG participation issue will establish the protocols to follow for participation. Such work rules may include a provision requiring employees who wish to participate in a City sponsored ERG to obtain supervisory approval to participate during work hours. Participation in an ERG or ERG sponsored event outside of work hours is on the employee's time.

Consistent with the City's commitment to diversity and inclusion, ERGs are encouraged to collaborate to the maximum extent feasible to facilitate understanding between groups and to maximize resources for the benefit of each group.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Department of Employee Relations

- Receive and review applications and formally approve the establishment of the ERG
- Ensure that ERGs are operating within scope of authority established in this Policy and in support of City interests of diversity and inclusion
- Attend ERG meetings as necessary and respond to questions, concerns, and recommendations

- Promote ERG activities
- Respond to funding requests from ERGs in a manner that is consistent with the ERG budget
- Provide annual update to Common Council and the Office of the Mayor
- Provide support and guidance as necessary and facilitate access to resources, policies, and decisions in support of the ERGs missions and goals.

Managers/Supervisors

- Encourage and support employee participation in ERGs and facilitate attendance to meetings and activities
- Provide information on resources and provide guidance and direction as needed
- Become an ally of one or more ERGs and encourage other members of leadership to volunteer as sponsors and help advance the ERGs platform
- Be reasonably responsive to requests for guidance from the ERG or its officers
- Note employee participation in an ERG in the employee’s assessments or performance evaluation as part of the employees’ professional development interests and progress.

ERG Members

- Ensure that a leadership team exists comprised of a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary.
- Ensure that ERG activities are consistent with this Policy
- Ensure that activities and decisions are consistent with the principles of diversity and inclusion
- Ensure that members adhere to City of Milwaukee policies in conduct and activities
- Ensure that participation in an ERG or ERG related activities does not conflict with work responsibilities or the department’s ability to meet its service delivery obligations
- Maintaining a positive respectful and productive ERG atmosphere

6. PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

ERGs are prohibited from engaging in the following activities:

- Activities that are political or that support a political cause;
- Activities that seek to promote a particular belief or ideology;
- Activities that support or make recommendations regarding the employment or hiring or any person;
- Activities that represent or can be construed as representing or serving as an advocate in complaints or disputes on behalf of an employee or employee group.
- Activities that address issues concerning wages, hours or any other term or condition of employment.

7. NON DISCRIMINATION

ERGs are required to operate within the City's non-discrimination ordinances and may not discriminate in membership or participation on the basis on any category.

8. STANDARDS AND BYLAWS

A. Meeting Frequency

ERG meetings will be held monthly unless otherwise determined by the ERG. In addition, any subcommittee meetings will be held as determined by that subcommittee.

B. Elections

Each ERG will have a leadership team that consists of a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary at a minimum. Elections shall occur in the calendar year following the establishment of the ERG.

C. Terms

Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary will serve for a term of two years. The outgoing Chair shall serve in an advisory role for six months. Other positions within the ERG will have term limits established by the individual ERG.

D. Management Level Sponsor or Ally

Each ERG will ordinarily have a management level sponsor or ally (Sponsor). The Sponsor will serve for a two-year term and will support the ERG by:

- a. Serving as a liaison between the ERG and upper-level management and leadership
- b. Promoting and advocating the ERG's programs and activities
- c. Mentoring and counseling the ERG
- d. Exploring funding and resource options
- e. Holding the ERG accountable to its objectives

E. Documentation

Agendas will be provided in advance and meeting notes will be taken and kept by committee designees.

Following is a typical, but not required, agenda for meetings:

- i. Attendance
- ii. Old business
- iii. Items discussed
- iv. Decisions made
- v. Action items
- vi. New business
- vii. Next meeting date and agenda

F. Protocol

All ERG meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the following inclusive behaviors:

- i. Share freely of member's experiences
- ii. Encourage others to share freely
- iii. Allow one conversation at a time
- iv. Respect unique/different points of view
- v. Agree to disagree
- vi. Confine comments to the issue at hand
- vii. Be sensitive to everyone's time
- viii. Be considerate of the feelings of others
- ix. Provide a timekeeper as needed
- x. Be creative and encourage creativity in others
- xi. Be an active communicator and listener
- xii. Think about the greater good of the organization as a whole

A. Annual Plan and Reporting

ERGs will develop an Annual Plan that articulates the goals, objectives, proposed budget, desired outcomes and tactics for meeting these goals. Each ERG will be accountable for adhering to its plan.

ERGs shall submit a quarterly report of activities and initiatives to DER and the Sponsor. Process and protocol shall be established by DER.

B. Finances

Upon submission of a budget and/or request for funds identifying the specific uses for any requested funds, DER may approve funding for initiatives supporting the strategic imperatives of the ERG. The ERG must track the funds spent and raised. The ERGs will report at least annually to DER on the amounts and what was accomplished. Reports will adhere to City of Milwaukee budget schedule. The amount provided to each group is based on the justification of the business impact. DER will provide information on the processes for establishing funding for ERG activities. ERGs are permitted to raise funds for their individual ERGs and to raise funds for a cause or charity.

C. Activities

ERG activities are prohibited when they conflict with COM policies, standards of conduct, personnel policies and procedures, state or federal law, or provisions of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances. ERGs may not be organized solely for general interest, recreation, sports, or hobby purposes, although an ERG may include such activities if it can demonstrate how it relates to its mission and purpose.

D. Promotional Materials and Media

ERGs are encouraged to promote their activities. Marketing and communications materials and activities must follow all applicable and established organizational policies and procedures. The name, logo or other insignia of the ERG and/or City of Milwaukee may be used for group activities or events only when the ERG formally agrees to sponsor the activity or event.

ERGs are to notify DER of any contact from the media and coordinate with DER on media appearances.

E. Adoption and Amendments

All ERGs are required to follow these standards and bylaws. ERGs can adopt any additional standards and bylaws that are consistent with this policy and the mission of the ERG. These standards and bylaws are created as a framework around which the ERG will carry out its mission. They are not intended to be a contract and may change, as needs change.